

## BED-ROCK PRINCIPLES.

## Senator Senn's Views on the Existing Evils.

EDITOR ADVOCATE:—The causes assigned for the present commercial and industrial stagnation, the lack of employment of workingmen, and the terrible sufferings of the poor, are almost innumerable.

High protection, or fear of reduction of the tariff; too much money, or an insufficiency of it; extravagance of the workingmen and farmers, or a disposition to hoard or pay debts. Some think that capital absorbs too much, and has killed the goose that laid the golden egg, while others claim that capital is afraid, does not earn enough to be employed, and ask for measures to conciliate capital. Many think we have too much paternalism, others ask for more.

But among all this babel of opinions, the sad pathetic, stern facts remain; that in a country overflowing with natural resources, inhabited with a population industrious, intelligent, and willing to work; there is an alarming increase of enforced idleness, absolute want, starving and freezing to death, while a few accumulate enormous fortunes. Under such conditions it is natural and proper to think and investigate; it is much better to think crudely, yes, falsely, to grope in the dark, than to be indifferent about these things. The remedy for all these evils lies in the direction of investigating and thinking, supplemented by honest and continuous efforts to carry into practical operation the necessary remedies.

That there is such a discrepancy in the opinion of men in regard to causes and remedies, simply implies a lack of thinking in this direction. I do not flatter myself that I am able to solve and demonstrate the problem in a perfect manner. I only hope to help a little.

In order to solve any problem right we must begin at the beginning, must start right. Our problem is the government of a nation, the proper adjustment of the various relations of man to man. The proper object of our government should be to protect the natural rights of each individual, to make laws to harmonize conflicting interests on a basis of justice. Men have deduced these ideas from what we call the higher law—a law that has found expression in all ages, in all nations, and struggles for expression in every human heart—the law of love and justice.

When this law is ignored or perverted, discord, confusion, sin and misery are the inevitable results. The economic condition of a people is governed by this law, because law reigns everywhere.

Man's physical wants can primarily only be supplied in one way. He may find something that nature has prepared for him, and use it in that state, or he may add his own labor to it, and perfect it. In other words everything that man has or wants is a product of nature or labor, or both combined. Coming down to the very complex civilization of our times, that principle still holds true but is more difficult to observe. There is not an article of necessity, comfort or luxury that man uses which does not come under this law. The food we eat, our clothing, our houses, our education and amusements, they all require labor to be produced, and it takes labor to pay those engaged in these avocations for their services.

In short, civilization might be defined as a state of society where an innumerable variety of avocations are pursued by different individuals acquiring wonderful skill in producing things by devoting themselves to one kind of work,

and by using all kinds of labor-saving machinery.

This naturally calls for a large number of people who devote themselves to the distribution of these articles, the buying, transporting and selling. Some place, somewhere the mischief-maker comes in and disturbs the proper adjustment.

It is not in the use of labor-saving machinery, because that properly used is a blessing. It can not be in a division of labor, nor in improved methods of transportation. It is not in any insufficiency of natural resources.

It needs no argument to prove that our sufferings, our hard times and panics never arise from an inability or unwillingness of the people to perform the necessary labor to produce all that is wanted, neither are they the result of a lack of natural resources.

To remove all doubts that anyone may have on this point I refer to the experience that this nation had in regard to its productive power during our late war.

Then we had a million of men withdrawn from productive industry, vast amounts of manufactured products wasted or destroyed, yet those left were able to produce an abundance of everything. We had another object lesson in that war, namely: that although a large proportion of the producers were withdrawn from productive labor, and a good deal of the remaining labor force was expended in producing articles of defense and destruction for the army, we had, if we eliminate the suffering and misery specially produced by the war, the best times and the greatest prosperity that this nation ever had.

(I hope no one thinks that I am an advocate of war for the purpose of bringing prosperity.) Why this prosperity in war? *Because it stimulates consumption.*

It seems then that under the present order of things the true law of consumption is disturbed. What is this law of consumption? Simply this: That when a man or a number of men produce of certain things more than they need, that they have the opportunity to exchange them for other products of labor, on a just basis of labor performed. The laboring man should for his day's work obtain the product of labor of some other man less a fair allowance for superintendence, risk, etc.

The farmer who produces more wheat, corn, beef and pork than he needs should have an opportunity to exchange his supplies for coffee, sugar, tea, fruit, clothing, shoes, books, papers, pianos, music, etc., at an exchange value based on the labor performed.

Another principle is that wealth is only produced for two purposes, that is, for consumption or use in production. Food and clothing are made to be consumed. Machines, factories, houses, ships, railroads, etc., are made to use in the production and transportation of wealth. It becomes evident then that there must be a correspondence between the consumption and production of wealth.

This brings us to the very heart of this question. We will not here discuss how the present inequalities of wealth have come about—will not insist that it was mainly through the rise in land values brought about by the community by watering stocks, by placing bonds on railroads when they were making money, by begging and stealing from the public through all manner of class legislation.

We might for the sake of argument admit that the 32,000 who are said to own \$36,000,000,000 (one-half) of our wealth, were so much more industrious, frugal and capable, than the rest of us,

as to have obtained it honestly, and it will not affect our argument. The difficulty consists not in their owning so much of real wealth, but in their owning a peculiar kind of so-called wealth. If these men owned so much of real wealth, i. e., products of labor, such as food, clothing, tools, implements, machines, buildings, factories, telegraphs, ships, railroads, etc., the wealth would not be an injury to the rest, and if they could claim interest or rent for the loaning or use of some of it, and take their pay in the products, the producers could easily produce enough to pay them, they would not want any more than they could use, and the producers could give that and still have enough for themselves. But ages of selfishness, cunning and treachery, on one side, and stupidity, indifference and prejudice, on the other have developed a system by which capitalist can get a species of so-called wealth that is not for consumption, but becomes a perpetual and ever increasing factor for earning more wealth of its kind. By this the law of consumption is so disturbed that the means to buy with are held by a few, who need but little compared with their ability to buy or the wealth they own, yet have the power to withhold from those who need articles of food, clothing, or houses, the means or opportunity to obtain them by work.

Let us not forget that land, or natural resources, and labor (hand and brain) are the only means of producing real wealth. If some are more industrious, more frugal and capable than others and acquire more wealth, they have a perfect right to do it, and the possession of such wealth would cause no suffering to others.

But let us go back to our 32,000 who own \$36,000,000,000 of so-called wealth and analyze it and the effect it has on the rest of the people. We will suppose that \$6,000,000,000 of it, that is, \$187,000 for each, is devoted for personal use, i. e., houses, yachts, hunting grounds, castles in Europe, horses, etc. Then the remaining \$30,000,000,000 we will assume, are invested in real estate, in railroad stocks, bonds, mortgages, notes, banks, shares in manufactories, telegraph companies, etc., yielding 4 per cent. interest, rent or profit, making \$1,200,000,000. We will be liberal and allow that they consume half of their income, that is, \$18,750 each; that still leaves \$600,000,000 of their income unconsumed to be reinvested again. Remember that our 32,000 demand money, not products, for their income.

Money can only be obtained by selling products, but here we find this dilemma—\$600,000,000 must be raised annually, which is not for consumption, but for reinvestment. If that amount of goods is produced, then there is no one to buy them, and we have overproduction. Manufacturers, when they cannot sell, stop producing; that throws men out of employment and lessens their abilities to buy, thereby still further curtailing consumption.

That such a condition must necessarily grow worse from year to year every thinking person must admit. We have the theory and we have the facts. Some of my figures are estimates only, but I put them very low. The figures for the wealth owned by 32,000 were published by J. G. Shearman several years ago, and are generally admitted to be substantially correct. The figures given by the census report and published by the ADVOCATE on the increased indebtedness of the people correspond with this theory. The present condition of the people also confirms it. Theory, facts and figures all proclaim that when

men are permitted, through usury, rent and profits, to absorb the products of labor and add to their fortunes by such methods that ruin and destruction must follow.

These things are in violation of God's law, and immediately lead to ruin.

Dear reader, pause and think that only about thirty years of active operation of this system has brought us to this condition. Starvation in a land where natural resources have hardly been touched yet. Wheat being fed to hogs because it has no price, when millions have to go hungry because they have no opportunity to earn the miserable pittance it would take to buy bread. Millions without sufficient clothing to protect themselves against the cold because manufacturers cannot sell and have to discharge their hands.

Sad but true to relate, those in charge of the affairs of this nation have no eyes to see the condition of the poor, no ears to hear the cry of distress, but, behold, how quickly they respond to the demand of the millionaires when they have a few hundred millions of idle money and provide bonds for them as a safe and sure investment, although it will increase the burdens of the producers. I have not said anything about politics, but I ask you, dear reader, is it not true that these conditions have been brought about through legislation? If so, can they be changed in any other peaceful way than by legislation? If you agree with these propositions, then I ask you to examine what parties have brought about these conditions, and also what parties are trying to bring about any remedies.

One word yet. Do you believe that man is created for higher and nobler objects than merely working for a bare existence, often in want and anxiety, for those depending on him for support, or, if he happens to be rich, for the accumulation of still greater riches? Do you believe a few ought to live in idleness, luxury and debauchery of all sorts and the many in hard toil and privations? Or do you believe that we all have the same Heavenly Father, the same natural right, a common origin and destiny, that we owe each other to live according to the law of love and justice? That if we happen to be better situated, more blessed with means, ability, power and opportunity than others, that we ought to use these gifts for the good of our fellow men instead as means of oppression.

If you believe in the Declaration of Independence, the teachings of Christ, in the common Fatherhood of God and brotherhood of man, then I appeal to you to come and help to bring about the kingdom of heaven on earth by establishing just, economic relations between man and man. M. SENN.

## Free Literature.

The "great plain people" have the gold gamblers on the run. Organize, educate, and complete victory is bound to come. For 10 cents in silver or stamps, your name will be placed on the list of reform press circulators and the leading reform papers of the United States will send you sample copies free for distribution among your neighbors. Write your name and address plainly. Address your letter to

FARMERS' TRIBUNE CO.,  
Des Moines, Ia.

# NOW

## IS THE TIME

To get up a club of ADVOCATE subscribers. We can't always give the special rates we are offering now. Send for club terms.